

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.

Edited and Published by:
G. A. Gibson 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada

“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed.”—Acts 17: 11.

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CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

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Please write bro. Growcott if you miss an issue or receive imperfect copies.

EDITORIAL

To the Glory of God

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created"—Rev. 4:11.

To those who have unhesitating confidence in the Bible as a divinely inspired record, the quotation set forth above will arrest their vigilant attention, and excite their intense admiration and heartfelt gratitude for this sublime revelation.

How few are mindful of this profound and fundamental truth! How few realize that man was not created for the purpose of self-gratification. One of the impressive lessons of the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the institution of a divine system of religion for Israel, is to show that religion was made for man. In fact, the general teaching of the Bible is that man—through belief and obedience of God's law—would glorify Him, and that is as it should be for, said Jesus:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and **glorify your Father** which is in heaven."

To *follow divine instructions*, in the matter of religion, is of paramount importance. This principle was deeply impressed upon the mind of Moses by the repetition of the warning that he must "make the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shown him in the mount"—Ex. 26:30. Writing to the Hebrews, Paul quotes this warning in 8:5, and says further—

"Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after"—Heb. 3:5.

The lesson is plainly apparent. God is supreme, and must be obeyed if our actions are to meet with His approval. The form of our service is revealed in the Scriptures, and it is our wisdom to *search for it*, and follow that which is well-pleasing to God. That Moses was also faithful in relation to the construction of the Tabernacle and its furniture is conclusively evident, for when the work was finished—

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the **glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle**. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle"—Exo. 40:34-35.

For almost 500 years, the Tabernacle continued as the religious center of the people of Israel, and in which the appointed offerings were made to the glory of God. After David had subdued all his enemies, and peace had come to Israel, it was his ardent desire to discontinue the portable Tabernacle, and build a permanent house, or Temple, in which the ark of the covenant would rest. However, because he had been a man of war, he was not permitted to do so; but Solomon, his son, was appointed to construct the building—

"Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof . . . and of the place of the mercy seat, and of the courts of the house of the Lord.

"All this, said David, the Lord made me to understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern"—1 Chron. 28:11, 12, 19.

This reveals that, although David was the architect and prepared the plans of the Temple, *the design was not his own*, for it had been communicated to him by divine inspiration.

During a period of seven years, Solomon supervised the construction of the Temple—a building that has not been superseded for its magnificence. When the work was completed, Solomon kneeled before all the congregation, and expressed the supplicating prayer constituting the entire 6th ch. of 2 Chron.—

"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and **the glory of the Lord filled the house.**"

The continuance of this manifested glory was contingent upon the obedience of Solomon and the people of Israel, as this chapter reveals (2 Chron. 7:17-20)—

"If thou wilt walk before Me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee . . . then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying,

"There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel. But if ye turn away, and forsake My statutes and My commandments . . . and go and serve other gods, and worship them;

"Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of My land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for My Name, will I cast out of My sight."

The history of Israel's unfaithfulness is a sad commentary on a once great nation under David and Solomon. Within 400 years the people were carried captive by other nations, and the Temple was completely destroyed. About a hundred years later, under the supervision of Ezra, the Temple was rebuilt and remained until about 20 B.C. when it was replaced by Herod's Temple with which Jesus was familiar. This was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.

During the Christian dispensation, it has become a general practice among many religious bodies to build churches, and lay a cornerstone upon which has been engraved the words, "To the glory of God." But these are entirely of man's devising. There can be no glory to God in such buildings because their congregations are astray from the system of doctrine and practice established by the labors of the apostles in the first century, and they are mixed up with the world and its pleasures for six days in the week. But aside from these things, such a cornerstone glorifies the building instead of glorifying God.

The Tabernacle and Solomon's temple were constructed by *following plans provided by divine inspiration*. But the Law was fulfilled in Christ, and similar conditions do not prevail in our time. Both Stephen and Paul give force of expression to this concept when they say—

"**The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands**; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?"—Acts 7:48-50.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands"—Acts 17:24.

The lesson intended for us is obvious. The Tabernacle and the Temple were representative of a national system; but they were also *types of the members of the household of Christ*. As Paul said (2 Cor. 6:16)—

"YE are the Temple of the living God."

And again (1 Cor. 10:31)—

"WHATSOEVER ye do, do all to the glory of God."

This being so, our minds should be a holy place in which the things of the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus must be stored, so that we will be able to bring forth out of our treasure things new and old. Set up in our hearts would be the altar on which the Christ-sacrifice would smoulder day by day, and from which would rise the incense of our prayers. Our daily reading and meditation of God's Word would kindle the altar fire, and keep it burning. Although living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, we would not be a part of it, for our time would be devoted to the service of one who has done far more for us than we are able to comprehend. Therefore we should praise the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

—Editor

1957 Texas Fraternal Gathering

God willing, the Texas Fraternal Gathering for 1957 will be held on the Christadelphian camp grounds near Hye, beginning at 9:00 A.M. Monday, July 29, and closing at noon Sunday, Aug. 4.

The usual procedure calls for three lectures each day, Monday through Saturday, at 11:00 A.M., 3:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M., the final service being on Sunday morning, at 11:00. Classes are arranged for the children throughout the week, and a period for reading and discussing the daily Bible lesson finds a place in the daily routine.

Ample facilities have been erected on the grounds for serving three meals each day to those present at the Gathering.

All the brothers and sisters who possibly can are urged to be with us for this week of rejoicing together in the hope of our calling. It is an occasion that is devoted wholly to the work of unifying, enlarging and strengthening the body of Christ as they endeavor to be a people prepared for the Lord in the day of His coming.

If you plan to come, or desire advance arrangements in the way of accommodations for your stay, please write to: E. W. Banta, 7009 Sherman St., Houston 11, Texas

The Chariot of the Cherubim

BY BRO. JOHN THOMAS

"He (God) placed at the East of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life"—Gen. 3:24.

Cherubim is a plural noun and represents, therefore, more objects than one. But, in what did this plurality consist? I should say, judging from a text in the next chapter, that it had a special regard to a plurality of *faces*; for when the Lord God sentenced Cain to a fugitive and vagabond life, he answered:

"Behold, then, from THY FACES (plural in the Hebrew) shall I be hid" (Gen. 4:14).

That is, "I shall no more be permitted to come before the Cherubic faces which Thou hast placed at the east of the garden, to present an offering for my sin." As he truly observed—

"Mine iniquity is greater than it may be forgiven."

He was exiled from the Faces of God still further to the east.

That the faces were connected with the Cherubim seems unquestionable from other passages of Scripture where cherubim are described. The Lord spoke of them to Moses in the mount. Having commanded him to make an ark, or open chest, overlaid with gold, with a crown along its upper margin, He said—

"Thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold. And thou shalt make two cherubim of beaten gold in the two ends of the mercy-seat" (Exo. 25:17-18).

In another place, this is explained thus—

"Out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubim on the two ends thereof" (Exo. 38:8).
Then it is continued (Exo. 35:20-21)—

"And the cherubim shall stretch forth wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings and their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.

"And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony I shall give thee."

It is probable that the reason why Moses gave no description of them in Genesis was because he intended to speak more particularly when he came to record their introduction into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. In the text above recited they are described as having wings and faces. Being made out of the same piece of gold as the mercy-seat, upon which they looked down—beholding, as it were, the blood sprinkled upon it—it is evident they were *symbols connected with the institution of atonement for sin through the shedding of blood.*

But they were still more significant. They were *God's throne in Israel*. Hence the psalmist saith (Psa. 99:1)—

"The Lord reigneth: He **sitteth** between the Cherubim."

This throne was erected upon mercy: and for this reason it was that the covering of the ark containing the Testimony, the Manna, and the resurrected Rod, was styled the *Mercy-seat*, or throne, where the Lord covered the sins of the people.

It was also the *Oracle*, or place from which God communed with Israel through Moses (Exo. 25:22)—

"There (said the Lord) will I meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of Testimony of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

But though Moses informs us of two cherubim with a plurality of faces and wings, he does not tell us what kind of faces, or how many wings, they had. This deficiency, however, seems to be supplied by Ezekiel. Those he saw had each of them *four faces and four wings*; a human body with feet like a calf's, and hands of a man under their wings. Of their faces, one was like a man's; a second like a lion's; a third like that of an ox; and a fourth like an eagle's.

The things of Ezekiel's first chapter, taken collectively, evidently represent *the Messiah upon his throne surrounded by his saints, and all energized and made glorious by the Spirit of God.*

The rings of Ezekiel's wheels were full of eyes; but in the cherubim which John saw, the wheels were not introduced, but two more wings were added, and the eyes were transferred to the six wings (Rev. 4:8). In this place the cherubim are styled "beasts" (more properly, "living creatures"—*ta zoa*), and are associated with "twenty-four elders."

Now, by attending to what is affirmed of them in another place, we shall see who are represented by the four cherubim of Ezekiel with 4 faces each, and their wheels; and John's 4 with one different face each, and the 24 typical elders. We read—

"They fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are (or represent) the prayers of the saints.

"And **they** sang a new song, saying: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and **WE shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:8-10).**

From this it is evident that the cherubim, etc., represent the aggregate of those redeemed from the nations, in their resurrection state. The Lamb, the four cherubs, and the 24 elders, are a symbolical representation of what is expressed by the phrase (1 Cor. 1:2)—

"Them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called **saints.**"
—that is, those who have been constituted the righteousness of God in Christ *in a glorified state.*

The cherubim are the *federal* symbol; and *the eyes* are representative of the *individuals* constituted *in him* who is signified by the Cherubim. The Lamb is introduced to represent the relationship between the holy eyes, or saints, and the Cherubic Faces; that is, between them and the Lord Jesus; while the *24 elders* indicate their constitution as "the Israel of God."

There are *twenty-four* because the Kingdom of God, being an Israelitish Commonwealth, is arranged with the *twelve sons of Jacob* as its gates (Rev. 21:12), and the *twelve apostles of the Lamb* as its foundations (Rev. 21:14)—the former being the entrance into present life of the *fleshly* tribes, or *subjects*; and the latter, the foundations of the *adopted* tribes, or **HEIRS** of the Kingdom; so that 24 is the representative constitutional number of the spiritual Israel of God; for without the natural the spiritual could not be, any more than there could be adopted Americans if there were no American nation.

But the Mosaic Cherubim were deficient of several of the characteristics which distinguish those of Ezekiel and John. They had simply the wings and the faces. His cherubim were not only of beaten gold continuous with the substance of the mercy-seat; but they were embroidered into the Veil, made of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen, which divided the Holy, and the Holiest, Places of the Tabernacle. Now, when Jesus "cried with a loud voice, he expired (*exepneuse*), and—

"The Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom."

Thus we see the breaking of the body of Jesus identified with the rending of the Cherubic Veil, thereby indicating that the latter was representative of the Lord.

We have arrived, then, at this, that the Mosaic Cherubim were symbolical of "*God manifest in the flesh.*" We wish now to ascertain upon what principles His incarnate manifestation was represented by the Cherubim?

First, then, in the solution of this interesting problem, I remark that the Scriptures speak of God in the following manner:

"God is LIGHT, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5).
Again (John 4:24)—

"God is a SPIRIT, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."
And thirdly (Deut. 4:24)—

"Our God is a consuming FIRE."

In these 3 texts, which are only a sample of many others, we perceive that God is represented by *light*, *spirit*, and *fire*. When, herefore, He is symbolized as manifest in *flesh*, it becomes necessary to select certain *signs* representative of light, spirit, and fire, derived from the *animal* kingdom. Now, the ancients selected the *lion*, the *ox*, and the *eagle* for this purpose, probably from tradition of the signification of these animals, or the faces of them, in the original Cherubim.

They are called God's Faces because His omniscience, purity, and jealousy, are expressed in them. But the omniscient, jealous, and incorruptible God was to be manifested in a particular kind of flesh. Hence it was necessary to add a *fourth face* to show in what *nature* He would show Himself. For this reason the *human* face was associated with the lion, ox, and eagle.

These four faces united in one human shape, formed out of beaten gold (and *two* such, not separate and distinct symbols but standing one on each end of the mercy-seat and the same in continuity and substance with it)—taken as a whole represented Jesus, the true, blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, or propitiatory, "in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:3, 9).

All four faces were to look upon the mercy-seat, so as to behold the sprinkled blood of the yearly sacrifice. To accomplish this, two cherubs were necessary; so that the lion and ox faces of the one, and the man and eagle faces of the other, should all be "mercy-seat-ward."

It will be seen from this view of things how important a place the Cherubim occupied in the worship of God connected with the "*representation of the truth.*" They were not objects of adoration, but symbols representing to the mind of an intelligent believer *the Seed of the woman as God manifested in the likeness of sinful flesh.*

This, I take it, was the significancy of the Cherubim which the Lord God placed at the east of the garden; and which became the germ of the shadowy observances of the patriarchal and Mosaic institutions—whose *substance* was of Christ.

Bible Questions Answered

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

Christ said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Lk. 10:18). If Satan is our own evil desires, how can this apply?

The answer is that Satan is not "our own evil desires" *merely*. The Bible Satan and the Bible Devil have many shapes, though all related to a common root—the unenlightened thoughts of sinful flesh. We must *distinguish between the shapes as they arise*.

Sometimes Bible Satano-diabolism is a man (as Peter—Matt. 16:23; or Judas—John 6:70). Sometimes it is the evil mind simply and purely (Acts 5:3, compared with v. 9; Acts 26:18). Sometimes it is persecuting authority (Rev. 2:10); and sometimes the present evil world in its political constitution (Rev. 12:3, 9, in connection with 17:9-12).

By this clue, it is easy to understand Christ's meaning in the words quoted by our correspondent. The disciples had just returned with good accounts of the power of his Name over those who were possessed and diseased. The Lord was gladdened by the report. It says, "He rejoiced in Spirit," and uttered the words in question. They describe the complete triumph over all evil which he foresaw—not yet accomplished in fact, but seen by him in vision, and described by him in terms of the aorist tense as is so common in the language of prophetic foresight. It was still future in Paul's day, who said to the Romans:

"God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (16:20).
—and in John's day, who saw the same event in the vision described in Rev. 20:1.

* * *

When do the responsible alien arise to judgment? Paul says: "The dead in Christ shall rise first." This appears to exclude them at the coming of Christ, but perhaps not necessarily so. Can you give us any scriptural evidence on the matter?

ANSWER—Paul says (1 Cor. 4:5)—

"Judge nothing before the time **till the Lord** come."

Therefore, the coming of the Lord is the time for the judgment of those who are to be judged (2 Tim. 4:1)—

"He shall judge the living and the dead **at his appearing**."

This day he speaks of (Rom. 2:16) as the—

"day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

Solomon is evidently referring to the same thing when he says,

"God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

Among the evil things to be judged in that day is the evil of "rejecting Christ and receiving not his words," in the face of works proving them divine. Those who are guilty of this—

"The word that I have spoken" (says Jesus) "the same shall judge them in the last day"
(John 12:48).

—for (John 3:19)—

"This is the condemnation (that is, the **ground** of condemnation) that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

That this condemnation is to be inflicted on the offenders after resurrection, is made certain by the declaration of Christ, that at his coming—

"They that have done evil shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:30).

This is only part of the Scripture information asked for by our correspondent as to when the responsible alien rise. *They rise at the coming of Christ*. But how then, enquires he, about the statement that—

"The dead in Christ shall rise FIRST"?

Well, he will get the answer by asking Paul—"First" *in relation to what?* First in relation to somebody else that is going to rise, or first in relation to something else that is going to happen at the same time?

The reading of the whole passage will show him this—that it is first in relation to what is going to be done with the *living* in Christ. First, the resurrection of the *dead* in Christ, then the gathering and glorification of the living in Christ. Read again, and see if it is not so.

But why does he appear to limit the resurrection episode to "the dead *in Christ*?" Because *it is resurrection in the largest sense he is thinking of*—rising, that is, to salvation, not rising as an item in a program or part of the process of judgment (though it necessarily includes this otherwise revealed element).

You will see this if you consider that all those of whom he speaks, the dead and living, are to meet in one body, and be "ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). None but those who are "in Christ," by adoption, either before or since his appearing to put away sin, will be in this one glorified body—therefore it could only be the dead *in Christ* and the living *in Christ* that could be in question.

Those who are *not* in Christ have no connection with the matter; but when the time comes, many of these will be dead and some will be alive. The dead and the living was the whole question—those who were asleep and those who were still awake.

It was no question of the dead in Christ and some other dead, but the dead *in Christ* and some *in Christ* who would not die but be "alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord." Read again and see. And it was no question of the ceremony by which they should be accepted by the Lord, but the mere question of the order in which their acceptance (taken for granted) would take place.

The standing before the judgment seat is left out as immaterial to the particular question in view; and so, therefore, also is left out the rejection of a vast multitude of unsuitable candidates and responsible unbelievers and hypocrites (Luke 12:45; Matt. 24:51)—who will all be devoured together (Heb. 10:27).

The Scriptures have to be read at least with the discrimination which we bring to bear on ordinary documents. We have to consider the particular matter or phase of the matter that is being talked of, otherwise we will make the mistake of understanding statements with a sense never intended (like the man who seeing "open to all" over a show circular supposed it meant free admission, instead of eligibility of exhibitorship to non-members and members alike).

The dead in Christ will certainly rise first (before the living in Christ are admitted to life eternal); but this does not mean that the unbeliever and hypocrite who by the righteous judgment of God are considered deserving of the punishment of the resurrection era, will not rise at the same time.

If I say: "The absent prize-holders will be called first, and then we who are present will be mustered with them, and conveyed to the grounds of the Head Master," I do not mean that the unsuccessful and the general public will not be at the ceremony, though I do not mention them.

* * *

Identity in the Resurrection

The identity of a man does not depend upon the particular atoms of substance of which he is made. This is shown by the fact that he is the same man at 60 that he was to 20, though having *entirely changed his substance* during the interval.

The thing that perpetuates his identity from the one time to the other during the change, is the sum total of those impressions that have been made on and embedded in his brain by the action of the senses through the nerves; which constitute what we call "memory." What these impressions are, no man can tell, but their existence is as unquestionable as the existence of light, which is equally incomprehensible. Now, in the resurrection, all that is necessary is for God to reproduce in a new body the memories of our previous lives. He does not require to use the identical substance that once belonged to us. How could He? We use a mountain of substance during our lifetime. Consider what a pile the meals of a life-time would make. No; a handful of any dust will be sufficient to enable Omnipotence to reproduce the man that lived before, however far squandered the stuff may be that he went into the grave with. The identity of the man will lie in those memories that God will know how to write on the new brain. "*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*" The man who believes in God can never be troubled with practical difficulties on this head.

"I Know Thy Works"

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias"—Rev. 3:22.

STUDIES IN THE APOCALYPSE—No. 4

An important division of the Apocalypse that calls for careful and special study on the part of those to whom the book was sent, is contained in chs. 2 and 3. There we read the personal messages addressed to each of the seven ecclesias in Asia to whom John was commanded to send it when he had completed the writing of it.

The introduction or background to these messages is found in ch. 1: the first 9 verses being more general and applying to the whole book; while from v. 10 to the end (where the first vision is recorded, in which John sees the seven golden candlesticks in the midst of which was *One like unto the Son of Man*) we see the laying of the groundwork preparatory to the messages.

This glorious personage, whose aspect was so striking as to cause John to fall at his feet as dead, held in his right hand seven stars, which he was told were the angels of the ecclesias—the angels being representative of the eldership or overseers of the ecclesias. In writing to the Corinthians Paul said—

"The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God."

In this vision of the first chapter we can see exhibited that relationship between Christ and his body such as exists on the higher level between himself and the Father. Jesus occupies an exalted position in the heavens at the right hand of God, having been delegated supreme power in the earth in connection with the divine purpose for the development of a people for his Name. We stand in awe here at the beauty and fitness of the symbol as we see this power in the right hand of Jesus exercised on behalf of the saints as he holds the stars in his right hand which stand for the seven ecclesias. The words of Paul to the Ephesians are brought to mind—

"God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6).

With the seven ecclesias at the right hand of Jesus, and he at the right hand of God, the Source of all life, wisdom and power—where is the saint who will not feel deeply the awful significance of his relation in an individual way to the scene presented! Each individual saint being a constituent of one of the stars in the right hand of the Son of Man, and discerning his own intimate relation to the symbol as a whole, and to the power behind it all, will certainly be stirred with interest to read and understand the messages, and take heed to every word spoken. He would feel the gravity of his position, and responsibility to him who says (Rev. 1:18)—

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

The importance of any message and the attention it deserves depend upon the honor, position and power of its author, and upon the relation of the one addressed to the message and its sender. On this basis, where could a book be found, other than this, wherein the author could present himself to the reader in such words as this: as one who is "*alive for evermore, and has the keys of the grave and of death*"!

As we read this introduction to the seven messages, in which the saints are caused to draw near with open hearts and ears to him who addresses them, we are able in this far off day to enter into the spirit that must have moved the faithful of the first century with sustained interest as they read for the first time these words from him who had the seven spirits of God.

The Isle of Patmos to which John had been exiled "for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ" was near the coast of Asia, and only a short distance from Ephesus, where the ecclesia was to which the first message was addressed. All the seven ecclesias were grouped together and could be reached by regular travelled route in the order named, beginning at Ephesus and ending at Laodicea.

A connection is established with the author of the messages at the beginning of each one, by direct reference to the symbols of the first chapter, and by other statements concerning his relation to the purpose of God—

"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand,
who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;
the first and the last, which was dead and is alive;
which hath the sharp sword with two edges;
who hath his eyes like a flame of fire;
and his feet are like fine brass;
that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars;
he that is holy, he that is true;
he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;
the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Then follows in each case the striking words that would awaken the brethren to thoughtful consideration of the measure of devotion and service they were rendering to the cause and interest of him who had called them—

"I know thy works."

Jesus had told his disciples—

"Where two or three are gathered together in my Name there am I in the midst of them"
(Matt. 18:20).

Jesus is personally in heaven, but because he is now the Deity manifested in Spirit, the Lord the Spirit, and hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars, he is as much a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts of his brethren, as though he were among them in body.

To the brethren of the first century, as well as to us, these opening words, "I know thy works," would be of the utmost importance, and would probably have more bearing upon the ultimate development of the brethren toward perfection in Christ, than any other one thing. This is impressed upon us as we consider how diligent and careful we would be with every moment of our time, in the matter of redeeming it to our salvation, if Jesus walked personally by our sides at all times, so that we would never have his presence out of mind. What a strong pulling power this would be for good if we could develop a constant awareness of the fact that Jesus, who will judge us at the last, knows, and records, our every thought and deed!

But it is encouraging to know that our good works are known as well as those that will be against us. The little things done in love for Christ, a cup of cold water to a disciple, for his Name's sake, will not go unrewarded; though for the present such deeds may seem small and quite unnoticed.

The loving hands that minister now to the spiritual and temporal needs of Christ's brethren, in these days of small things, will find their reward at last when Jesus tells them—

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

As Jesus knew the works of the ecclesias in the first century, so does he know what we do in his service today. And we should bear in mind that it is not a *passing* knowledge that he has of our works, but a *permanent record* comprising the whole period of our lives in the Truth. It is by means of this record that he will be able, as the righteous Judge of all the earth, to give to every one "according as his works shall be." But no flesh could be saved apart from the mercy of God in the forgiveness, through Christ's Name, of those unworthy deeds that we have repented of *and forsaken*. We have the assurance that these will be remembered no more against us.

We require to study these messages carefully for the insight we may thus obtain into the mind of him whom we serve. He speaks to the brethren of things he hates, and utters words of approval where there is conformity to the high standards of life in his Name. The things he decidedly hates are lack of steadfastness in love; false teachers, such as false apostles, spurious Jews (Christadelphians), Nicolaitanes, the woman Jezebel, and Balaamites; bearing the Name of Christ, yet being dead spiritually; those with only a "little strength" in ecclesial life, and those like the Laodiceans who said they were "rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing;" yet, in the eyes of him who knew their works, they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

But there were things Jesus approved, and which he could commend, among some of the ecclesias: their labor, patience and work. They had tried some and found them false; they hated certain false deeds, which Jesus also hated. He approved their tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich); some had held fast his Name and had not denied his faith, even under dire persecution; and a few had not defiled their garments—

"They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

Seven times repeated, as if to show the complete application of his words to all the brethren in John's day, in all parts of the Roman world, as well as those who would live in succeeding generations, are the words—

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (ecclesias)."

That Jesus loves his brethren and is deeply interested in their eternal welfare is plainly manifested in these seven final messages that he delivered to them for their guidance and comfort:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

He not only *stands* at the door, but he *knocks*, that the door of our hearts might be opened so he may come in and abide there with us.

Contemplating these gracious words, we are overcome with the magnitude of that abounding love that is extended toward us from the source of all life and power in the heavens. The wise, the great, the all powerful, the ever-living thus stands with extended hands as a suppliant, pleading that we will hear his voice and heed his words that he might give us life. That this is a display of love, mercy and goodness is not to be doubted as we consider that the appeal comes to us as creatures of the dust, with nothing we can add to the power and greatness of him who speaks to us.

Great is the reward for those who lay up these words in their hearts, and bind them to the post of their doors, that they may be a spring of living water, welling up unto eternal life. Each message closes with a promise that adds incentive and interest and leaves the mind impressed with the great recompense of the reward held out for future bestowal upon the faithful ones—

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

This is followed by the promise that the victor should not be hurt of the second death; that he would be given to eat of the hidden manna; that he would be given power over the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron; that their names would not be blotted out of the book of life, but would be confessed before God and His angels; that he would be made a pillar in the temple of God, and go no more out; and at the close, the final glorious promise of a place with him in his throne—

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

May we give the utmost consideration to the Spirit's words contained in this seven-fold message that forms an important part of God's final revelation to man. The right application to ourselves of the injunctions therein contained is what Jesus was directing us to in the words—

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:18).
—E.W.B.

"GOD HATH CHOSEN THE POOR"

God makes choice of His sons and daughters among those who are in a position more favorable for learning wisdom in the matter—among those who, having nothing to boast of, learn to make their boast in God; who having no possession but the possession of the Word, are able to rejoice in it and esteem it more than their necessary food (Job 23:32); who having none of the perishable riches, prize the riches of Christ at their unsearchable value, counting all things but dung that they may obtain them

Let the poor then rejoice in the comfort that belongs to them, taking care only to see to it that while poor in this world, they are not poor also in faith, for then they are poor, poor indeed.

—Bro. Roberts.

"The Salt of the Covenant"

"Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."

We have recently been following the life of Jesus in the account by Luke. When he was twelve years of age he was found in the Temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions—

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:46-47).

But now, 21 years later (Luke 15), we find him held in very different esteem by the leaders in Israel. He had travelled many miles through the length and breadth of Canaan. He was now drawing toward the close of three and one-half years of intensive, unstinted effort in the service of his Father. And with the revealing of the good news of the coming Kingdom, which he was preaching together with the wonderful deeds of mercy which he performed, he had incurred many enemies amongst the religious leaders of his day. This enmity was a result of jealousy because of his popularity with the common people, he not being as they esteemed an educated religious exponent.

There was a very strong class distinction manifest in that age, separating the rulers and elders from the average man and woman; separating self-righteous Pharisees and Scribes from those whom they considered sinners. With piercing eye the Master was able to discern their thin veneer of righteousness, and expended little effort upon such a class of humanity. Rather because they claimed to be in Moses' place with supreme knowledge, he cloaked his words in parables—touching and impressive stories—striking a responsive chord in the receptive hearts of the sinners or common people.

"Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" (Luke 14:34).

This was a searching question put by Jesus, as we read yesterday. And he made it more appealing by the following words—

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

But this was not the first time he had drawn their attention to this simple condiment to impress his hearers with the spiritual value of an imperative injunction contained in the Law of Moses. Early in his ministry he had impressed his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount that they were the "*salt of the earth*."

Salt in the natural world is used for preventing corruption; as a cleanser; and as a healer. Further it changes the flavor of food from a flat insipid taste to a sweetness and freshness delightful to the palate. So, we find, under the Law of Moses, that salt was a requisite element in all offerings—

"With all thine offerings, thou shalt offer salt . . . neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering" (Lev. 2:13).

As *leaven*, which was a symbol of corruption, was entirely *excluded* from offerings under the Law (except in one or two cases for a special significance), so *salt* which was a symbol of preservation and continuance was *insisted* upon. So Paul makes the spiritual application—

"Let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8).

The spiritual significance of these things becomes clear when we understand the application to which the Law of Moses was put by Christ and the apostles. These points become figures of the true

and living way, of the character which was to be manifest by those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor and eternal life.

The provision of salt in all offerings was an admission on the part of the offerer of relationship to corruptibility and death, and the fact that a way was to be provided for the elimination of this cardinal element in man's nature. It spoke of the necessity of the preservation of the Truth in its purity, not only in letter but in the beauty of its spiritual values. The Law, though meticulous to the letter as we have seen in our recent readings in Leviticus, also manifested *those finer constituents of Divine* character which must be manifest between man and man; those noble characteristics which remained for Jesus to portray, as he fulfilled his part as God manifest in the flesh.

Those spiritual leaders of Israel, Moses, David and others, could be well classed as the salt of the earth in their days. Not only did they firmly adhere to the Truth but they also illustrated those unselfish attributes of self-sacrifice and unlimited concern for the well-being of their fellow-men, and an honest desire to help in whatever way possible. To God their offering was a sweet-smelling savor, wholly acceptable to Him.

So to Christ's hearers—those common people who "heard him gladly," who were not of the high-minded Pharisee class—the term "salt" became a fitting designation. They became his disciples, and though it took a few years to manifest in them the fullest characteristics of salt, yet potentially they were of that class. Their writings later in life indicate the true Divine characteristics which they developed, and which provide the necessary counsel for the *preservation* of our lives, not only for the age to come, but also for well-being individually and ecclesially in the days of our probation.

The application does not stop with the disciples in the time of Christ. It carries on through the ages, to our own days and beyond. We, too, have been called to a participation in the Gospel. We become, at baptism, potentially the salt of the earth. How we maintain the Truth during our lives predicates the value of the salt in the offering of our lives. If the fundamental elements of truth are not maintained, if the character of Jesus in humility, and supreme love for God and one another, are not preserved and increased, our sacrifice will not rise as an acceptable savor unto our Heavenly Father. A dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto us, and we stand with Moses, David, and the disciples of Christ as the salt of the earth. Therefore the related facts associated with salt have a definite application in our lives.

Christ's ministry was drawing to a close and he was seeking to impress all with the fundamentals of service to God and the necessity of maintaining the correct estimate and balance in personal thoughts. He was particularly stressing who could not be his disciples, or what would exclude from his friendship. His remarks were growing in intensity against the spiritual corruptions of his time. And though his remarks have a general application to all time, their specific intent was against the position of the Pharisees, who were in possession of all the evidence of God in their midst, yet chose to refuse Christ, and wrap themselves up in their own interests.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in"
(Matt. 23:13).

This, declared Christ, as his righteous anger burned forth against them. The Pharisees, who were in possession of God's Word and who professedly declared its teachings, were salt which was useless in the sight of God. They had buried the simple Gospel message to Abraham and David under an avalanche of their own traditions, making void the commandments of God, while submerging the spirit which God implanted in the Law by a distorted application of the letter. They were unsavory salt only fit to be cast out, which later, under the terrible scourge of the Roman legions, they were. They represent a class which in all ages may appear among the sons of men, where the relationship between good and evil is stressed.

And while we use our energies to preserve the Truth, *there is a danger that we may lose the humility which is so pleasing in the eyes of God and which He requires of us in service to Him.* We are rather reticent to admit of it being possible. Yet here again is a danger. To admit of the possibility is to face a fact squarely and prepare ourselves against it.

The Pharisees felt quite justified in their position and no doubt could defend it by an appeal to Moses; as they did upon several occasions as they tried to entangle Jesus in the breaking of the Law. Indeed they were very quick to misapply the Scriptures, which became a hardening of their hearts to the commonest of kindnesses to their fellowmen. How Christ drove home that lesson as he spake the parable of the Good Samaritan! He tried to arouse interest beyond the self-satisfied stage to a peak where the fullness of life consisted in *spending and being spent for others.*

Christ realized that his every act was watched, analyzed and reported to the religious authorities. They failed to comprehend his view of life, being blinded by their own tradition, prejudice, and hypocrisy. But he also knew that there was very little soil amongst such a class where the Truth would thrive. We read this morning—

“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him” (Luke 15:1).
He had declared—

"I am not come to call the righteous (the self-righteous), but the sinners (self-admittedly) to repentance."

But the Pharisees reasoned that if Christ were a teacher of truth he wouldn't have anything to do with the common people. They had established the standard—a human standard—and then undertook to measure Christ according to it. How human it is for man to make such a mistake, and place an estimate upon another's worth by what he feels he may have attained himself! But Paul's warning should be ever in our minds. Those who—

". . . measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves are not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12).

This attitude is clearly shown in the prayer of the Pharisee and the publican. Said the Pharisee (Luke 18:11)—

"I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as other men, extortioners, etc., or even as this publican."

While the humble publican would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, and said—

"Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner" (v. 13).

This last word, "sinner," was the key to Divine acceptance. But though we give ready assent unto the truth of these things, it is frequently necessary for us to be jarred into a realization of *how directly the lesson points to us.*

Christ spake three parables having a direct bearing upon this point and on all the parties concerned. They were the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son. In each, the overshadowing mercy of God is clearly visible and the great truth embodied that God is not willing that any should perish, which concern He would have *us manifest toward one another.*

First we see a shepherd with a flock of 100 sheep, who suddenly discovers that one is missing. How painstakingly he searches out the one! How joyous he is over the finding of that which was lost! So Christ with infinite care searched out those members of his race who were in confessed need of being found. His mixing with them was not with the purpose of enjoying their sins, as may have been construed by the Pharisees, but to reveal unto them the condition they were in and call them to repentance. But he spent little time upon the Pharisees for they insisted that they were not lost.

Jesus was glad that there were those in his time who would heed his calling. Though he spake in parables, his message was plain for those of the right spirit, and they heard him gladly.

He continued his discourse in the same strain, using the parable of the ten pieces of silver, which had the same import as the lesson of the lost sheep. But though these two allegories impressed the Divine viewpoint manifest toward all of a contrite heart, they left the offenders of this rule uninvolved. There was wisdom presented for them to receive if they were of a receptive mind but not otherwise.

These parables were persuasive, having an appeal to those features natural to the lives of man, their occupations and their purse, experiences of their every day lives, those things upon which their interests were mainly centered. Contrasted with this we see the Divine attitude toward His family, and we learn from it. Is it reasonable to adopt an attitude of unconcern toward our fellow-men, while we in the simpler things of life compass land and sea to attain our purposes? If we feel that our brethren and sisters are wrong, should we not seek them out and strive to resolve our difficulties?

It may have been a lack of discernment on the part of the Pharisees to realize the intent of his words. Whereupon he proceeded with his graphic teachings, this time with a clear object.

A father has two sons. One faithful to his father's will, the other is restless and impatient, desires his share of inheritance and proceeds to depart and squander his new wealth in a riotous way among strangers, to his utter poverty. In such humbling conditions he comes to realize his position and resolves that service to his father, regardless how menial, will assure his life. It is here that the parable meets those which had gone before. But it goes much deeper. While the penitent son is drawing near, the father sees him and hurries to meet him, greeting him with profound joy, and extends the invitation to all to join in the outpourings of his heart. But the happiness is marred by the aloofness of the other son and his refusal to receive his brother with grace.

Here the Pharisaic attitude is placed squarely across the joyous pleasure which was experienced by Christ's reception of the repentant sinners. How would each class receive the teaching? The sinners would greatly rejoice that they were so accounted as to be permitted to be classed as sons and daughters of God, yet in their favored state would not presume to forget from what they had been called, nor their resolution to serve God faithfully for the rest of their lives.

But the other class, absorbed in their own rated goodness, would only see the Master as making a virtue out of sinning and rewarding a renegade, while the righteous indignation of the faithful son is lightly esteemed. Their wrath would reach a peak of vehemence. What a hopeless task to convince such a class! Yet the lesson was not entirely lost. Nicodemus came to Jesus, even if it was by night for fear of his associates' wrath.

When we contemplate the lofty position unto which Christ was called, and yet view his utter abasement of himself—washing the disciples' feet, suffering himself to be reviled to the lowest degree, while he held his peace, neither bruising a broken reed, nor quenching a smoking flax, that somehow, some way, he might cause the Name of God to be glorified, and finally asked God to forgive his executioners on the plea of their ignorance—we must be very careful of our own example. We have not been called upon to endure near the shame and infamy directed toward our Leader. Shall we then assume a more superior estimate of ourselves and our calling than he?

Let us remember at all times that when we are defending the Truth we are performing the work of the Lord and it must be performed *as He would have it done*. Sufficient scriptural examples will flash across our minds to impress the seriousness of this point. The case of Uzzah and the Ark of God is outstanding. And should there be a difference of thought, let it be sought out with love toward each other. Never should it be permitted to be used as a basis for developing prejudices and as a ground for standing aloof.

Again let us examine and re-examine our own position to be sure that where we stand is absolutely without possibility of equivocation. When the brother of the erring son refused to rejoice with his father, though he had been faithful for many years, he manifested how wretched, miserable, poor and blind and naked he was when it came to *putting his service to the test*. He completely failed. Do we? Does this not teach us a great lesson? In matters between ourselves, how necessary it is for us to continually search our own hearts, to purge out those elements of self which ever arise to mar our service in God's eyes.

How related we have become to one another in our years of association together! We need each other greatly. The Truth has become our entire life. Should these loving associations be taken away from us, we should not know where to turn. When there is the severance of a member in whatever way, even as Paul tells us, we all experience pain. While then these members are with us let us not lightly esteem them, but seek them out and encourage and foster the example of love which Christ has left for us to follow.

The unmerciful son was *convinced that he was right* and could not stand to see a manifestation of concern upon his father's part toward his errant brother. He had performed a good service but now he was spoiling it. The companionship which perhaps the two brethren had enjoyed in previous years as they toiled together in their father's service was now possible again.

But no. The faithful son refused to cross the line and accept the hand of repentance. Many years more of faithful service shoulder to shoulder was thus blocked. Yes, this man had performed his years of sacrifice and been faithful to God and his father. But all imperceptibly to himself he had forgotten the simple element of salt, *that gracious preservative of true spirit amongst men*. Rather he chose to smother the smoking flax, the new evidence of spiritual life in his brother.

Regardless of our years of service before God, regardless the position we may hold of esteem in the eyes of others, we must call to mind always the words of Paul, whose labor for God far surpassed the very chiefest apostles—

"I count not myself to have apprehended the prize. I keep under my body, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

He was always conscious of the danger of himself failing of the promise, or of coming short of the mark of the high calling. We have received this commandment from Christ—

"That he who loveth God, love his brother also" (1 John 4:21).

"We know what love means from the fact that Christ laid down his life for us; so we also ought to lay down our lives for our brethren" (1 John 3:16).

If these things be in us we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the service of God. So shall we manifest that in every deed we also are the salt of the world. Let then these continued associations the one with the other have their perfect work among us, that we may abound in the work of our Lord.

—F.H.

Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son

"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God . . . and Pharaoh's heart was hardened"—Exo. 8:19.

PART EIGHT

We now pass from the miracle of the Rod which became a real serpent, and was changed back again into its original state, to the same Rod and its use on the occasion of the second visit to Pharaoh

for the purpose to convince him that the claim of Moses and Aaron to be the divinely-instructed representatives of the God of Israel was valid.

The second miracle took the form of a plague, and was preceded by a miracle of not less importance—the foretelling to Moses and Aaron the time and place, when and where, they would meet with Pharaoh—

"The Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the Rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.

"And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath, sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness; and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

"Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord; behold, I will smite with the Rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned into blood. And the fish that is in the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy Rod and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.

"And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the Rod and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died, and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

"And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the Lord has said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

"And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled; after that the Lord had smitten the river" (7:14-25).

What a terrible reality we have in the picture before us! It furnishes its own commentary. The Nile was held sacred by the Egyptians. No water could excel it for pleasantness and health. The fish of this beautiful river, together with the fruits of the earth, were the principal food of the Egyptians. The terribleness of this plague cannot easily be realized.

"The magicians did so with their enchantments."

—that is, they *pretended* to turn the little water, which they were able to procure by digging, into blood. What a contrast! The Nile and its streams, all ponds, pools, and other collections of water, whether in the houses of the Egyptians or wherever it might be found, all turned into blood.

Does it seem possible for any rational being to come to the conclusion that the magicians did anything but delude for the moment Pharaoh and his servants? The deception, however, was but short-lived, as will appear when we come to consider the next plague.

The seven days being ended, the third miracle, or second plague, was proceeded with, after the usual visit to Pharaoh, and the request to let Israel go. Pharaoh's heart being hardened, he again refused to comply, and was threatened with an inundation of frogs; which, at the command of Moses—

". . . came up and covered the land of Egypt."

It is said of the magicians that they "did so with their enchantments." There is no need to repeat here the arguments which have been formulated in regard to the previous exhibitions of divine power, and the self-evident deceptions of the magicians practised upon Pharaoh. But *their power over him is now practically at an end*, as evidenced by the fact of his sending for Moses and Aaron, and his request that they should—

"Entreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs."
—from him, and from his people, and the promise that if this was done, he would let the people go that they might sacrifice.

We cannot, however, pass this plague and its effect by without calling attention to the *endeavor on the part of Moses to put an end once and for all to any doubt that might linger in the mind of Pharaoh as to the source of the power by which he was thus being afflicted*, and by the genuineness of their claim to be divinely commissioned to make the demands which they were making on behalf of Israel's God concerning His people.

Thus, Moses suggested to Pharaoh that *he* should fix a time for the taking away of the frogs, excepting such as should remain in the river. This suggestion was complied with by Pharaoh, who said, "*Tomorrow*." And Moses said to him—

"Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God . . .

"And Moses cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses.

"But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said" (8:8-15).

It may be that Pharaoh had bethought himself that the river Nile naturally produced frogs, and that the occurrence of them was consequently only natural, but on a largely increased scale; and that, therefore, there was really very little evidence of the supernatural in it, after all.

But what about the frogs being destroyed at the time appointed by Pharaoh himself? Surely, whatever ground there might be for concluding that the affair was an operation of nature, there could be none for arriving at the conclusion that their *destruction at a fixed time* was also a like operation.

The explanation of the foolish reasoning of Pharaoh, whatever it may have been, in the instance before us, is that *his heart was hardened* to permit of the accumulated wonders in connection with Israel's deliverance.

This refusal of Pharaoh to liberate the children of Israel was followed by a third plague. At the instance of the angel—

"Aaron stretched out his hand with his Rod, and smote the dust of the earth and it became lice in man and beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land.

"And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but **THEY COULD NOT**; so there were lice upon man and upon beast.

"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said" (8:16-19).

The callousness of Pharaoh in the presence of this scourge; and especially as the magicians had been compelled to admit in his presence that the creation from dust of lice was the finger of God, is in itself evidence of divine influence upon his heart.

The admission of the magicians that this was really a miracle, opens our eyes to the fact that they had hitherto employed their powers of deception in the persuasion of Pharaoh that there was

nothing supernatural in the things that had been done by Aaron and Moses in proof of the divinity of their mission.

After this admission we hear nothing more of the magicians. They, at all events, were thoroughly satisfied that God was on the side of Moses. The evidence of this fact was overwhelmingly great. Serpents might be made to appear by the magic wand of deception; water, under the same wand, might appear to be turned into blood; frogs might also be forthcoming as occasion might require; but what about the dust becoming lice?

The earth itself was worshipped by the Egyptians. They saw that it had power to bring forth fruits for their sustenance, and under the name of Isis they held it as an object of their adoration. In this act of God, therefore evidence was before their eyes that *the God of nature is greater than nature*—a lesson which is much needed in our own times of "scientific" research.

Here was a lesson to the Egyptians that the earth did not afford its life-sustaining products by any independent virtue of its own; and the reversal of the nature of its productions should have proved sufficient not only for the magicians but for the king himself.

But what about the Priests, who were required to shave the hair from every part of their bodies every third day, and wear a single tunic lest any vermin should fix on them? They were also face to face with a plague which they loathed, and in the presence of which they were helpless. Yet, with all these mighty wonders before him, *Pharaoh's heart was yet hardened.*

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

"ALL IS VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT"

It is indeed true, that few are the days, and vain the strength, and empty the joys of man. The saying that "All is vanity and vexation of spirit" is hackneyed, but terribly real, as applied to this life apart from the blessed hope.

The finest intellect grows dim and twinkles out at last; the sublimest powers wane before the decay of years. The most splendid honor shrivels in the presence of death. Friends with their pleasantness and favors, avail nothing to avert the unalterable doom. Riches, with all their surroundings of ease and elegance, are powerless to stay the hand of the Destroyer that sweeps all, at last, into the pitiless abyss of oblivion.

The dread consummation hurries. Death walks in the noon day, and the thousands fall before him. Every soul is ultimately included; every good destroyed. The finest estate has to be left; the fondest desire surrendered; the largest fortune given to others.

"Every man, at his best estate is altogether vanity."

The coffin is the goal: the fret and sweat, the anxiety and the effort, the hopes and the achievements, the laughter and tears of life, as lived by the unjustified sons of Adam, end in the quietness of the grave.—**Bro. Roberts.**

Our Old Man Is Crucified With Him

"We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The predominant characteristic of this occasion is *joyfulness*. We are told that the awakening of a son of Adam to the love of God and the decision to become united to Christ is a cause of great joy

in heaven. One more is added to the family of the sons of God, all knit together in the beauty of holiness.

While an occasion of great joy, it is also an occasion of great seriousness and solemnity. We are hereto witness both a death and a birth. The whole background of baptism is *death*. The act of baptism is a recognition that the end of natural man is death—that all are subject to the power and lordship of the great enemy—that death casts an ever-present shadow over all life's hopes and joys—that the highest and noblest and sweetest of this life's activities all end in the darkness of the tomb.

But this is only part of the picture. This is the *natural* side. While baptism is a recognition of this state, and all the vanity and sorrow surrounding it, its principal purpose is to manifest the *great deliverance from it* that the love of God has, through Christ, provided. Baptism is a death whose purpose is to make way for a glorious new birth.

The chapter just read (Rom. 6) is a strong, intense exhortation to holiness, based on this death-and-new-birth symbolism.

Symbols are but shadows—it is the *reality they symbolize* that counts. The act of baptism itself is only a symbol—it is upon the fulfilment of the reality of the newness of life it portrays that life and death depend.

Paul shows that the reality symbolized is *death to the old natural way of the flesh and rebirth to the new way of the Spirit of holiness*. His conclusion in ch. 5 is this, that—

"As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21).

But *how* does grace "reign through righteousness unto eternal life"? Paul has said that—

"Where sin abounded, grace—that is, the gentle unmerited goodness and kindness of the glorious love of God—did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

And also he has said that God had included all under sin, that He might have opportunity to extend His grace, mercy and kindness to all.

"What shall we say then?—(he asks)—Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"
(Rom. 6:1).

Put in this blunt way, the thought seems self-evidently absurd, but actually *it is the unconscious presumption that lies behind any carelessness or complacency about any form or evidence of sin*.

Sin is a terrible, destroying disease—highly infectious—ininitely more deadly than any physical disease. When we are not straining every effort in the war against this evil thing, we are in practice saying, "Let us continue in sin so grace may abound."

"God forbid!—Let it not be!—How shall we, that are **dead to sin**, live any longer therein?"
(Rom. 6:2).

What does he mean: "*Dead to sin*"? How does a man become dead to sin?

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (v. 3).

That is, do you not know that the act of baptism is *an act of recognition of the necessity of a DEATH*—a death in order to end a certain state of affairs—to create a complete severance and separation and termination (v. 4)—

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

We note the words, "*by the glory of the Father*"—"like as *Christ* was raised by the glory of the Father, even so *we* also. . ."

Ours, too, must be "by the glory of the Father"—there is no other way—no other possible way of walking "in newness of life." We cannot do it of our own weak, mortal, sinful selves. "*Newness of life by the glory of the Father*" is the great thought that gives baptism its beauty and significance. A new life, a completely new beginning. What a wonderful occasion it is!

A natural son of Adam, an earthy creature born under the shadow of death and bound by the dominion of sin, reaches a stage of development and enlightenment wherein he is drawn by the power of God to voluntarily choose that which is good, and holy, and divine, and reject all that is related to the kingdom of sin and the wilfulness of the flesh—not from fear of consequences—not even just from desire for reward—but rather from pure, transforming love for a glorious divine Benefactor and Father—from an overwhelming sense of His infinite goodness and the transcendent joy of His friendship and love—

"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.

"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

"There is no fear in love: perfect love casteth out fear."

When we look at the beautiful picture John draws of divine love—of its holiness, and purity, and fearlessness, and perfection—we are apt, like Peter, to draw back into the thought—

"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

But the beloved apostle allays our fears, and gently draws us onward, teaching us that this beautiful picture is a matter of development and growth, though at first only dimly perceived—

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven;

I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong;

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him from the beginning" (1 John 2:12-13).

And he shows us the way—

"Whoso **keepeth His Word**, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him" (1 John 2:5).

Paul tells us (Rom. 10:17)—

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the **Word of God**."

That is the beginning. When hearing has brought faith, and faith—belief—has moved to thankful and humble obedience in the waters of baptism, then the joyful course of life and love reaches higher and higher toward the perfection of the divine ideal. This is expressed in many ways, Paul speaks of it as—

"Coming in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

He speaks of it as being—

"Rooted and built up in him . . . unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"
(Col. 2:7, 2).

He speaks of it perhaps most beautifully and deeply in this way:

"We all, with open face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory **by the Spirit of the Lord**" (2 Cor. 3:18).

This is the glorious and exciting spiritual experience that leads upwards in ever-increasing joyfulness from the waters of baptism to the eternal radiance of the day of the Lord.

Baptism, while only the beginning, is the great turning-point in life. The act of baptism is unquestionably the greatest and most important single act and moment of one's entire lifetime.

"IF we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

It is clear that Paul is speaking, not just of the literal act of baptism which all professed believers pass through, but rather he is thinking of the full significance of being "*planted in the likeness of his death,*" for the parallel thought—"likeness of his resurrection"—does not just mean coming out of the grave, but the *resurrection of life* in its fullest and most glorious sense.

Resurrection as such—just the coming out of the grave—does not, we know, depend on baptism, but on *responsible knowledge of God*. Therefore the "likeness of Christ's resurrection" to which Paul refers cannot just mean emergence from the grave, for he makes it contingent upon a being "planted together in death."

And likewise this "planting together" cannot just be the external form of baptism for that is no assurance of sharing Christ's glorious resurrection—it must be the reality to which the act of baptism testifies and bears witness—the death of the "old man" and the "walking in newness of life." He continues—

"Knowing this, that our old man is (in baptism) crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rm. 6:6).

"*Our old man is crucified with him.*" We are all double personalities—the old man of the flesh and the new man of the Spirit. Paul tells the Ephesians (4:22) that the old man is "corrupt—decaying—going to ruin—through deceitful lusts."

He calls them deceitful because *they never give the pleasure and happiness they seem to promise*—because they appear good and desirable to the blindness of the natural mind but actually only end in sorrow and regret and emptiness.

The "old man" is the natural man—pleasing ourselves—doing what we think *we* want to do—following the ordinary way of the world—everything that is contrary to the enlightened mind of the Spirit. We can most clearly see the distinction in contemplating the characteristics of the *new* man—the fruits of the Spirit, as Paul gives them in Gal. 5:22—

Love—that is, thinking, desiring and doing good to all, regardless of what they do to us.

Joy—a consistent spiritual cheerfulness flowing from close and satisfying fellowship with God.

Peace—calm, inward tranquillity—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."—the mind resting at all times upon God.

Longsuffering—inexhaustible patience and kindness toward all human weakness and waywardness, recognizing the frailty and sadness of natural man.

Gentleness—no roughness, or hardness, or bitterness, or pride, or self-assertion—all of which are manifestations of ungodly ignorance.

Now Paul says that in baptism the old man is *crucified*— everything in the flesh contrary to these Spirit-fruits is crucified in the act of baptism.

Crucifixion has 2 aspects: a putting to death, and a public holding up to condemnation and repudiation.

The natural Serpent nature must be put to death, and in its putting to death it must be publicly held up to condemnation on the Rod of the Spirit-Word.

Baptism is a public repudiation of all these things as a way of life—a renouncing of allegiance to the old Master, Sin, whom we all serve from birth, and a pledging of allegiance to a new Master and a new way of life. It is a solemn covenant—

"All that the Lord hath said will we do."

Paul says (Rm. 6:18) that in baptism we are "*made free from sin.*" What does it mean to be "made free from sin"? What does it mean in the *actual realities of life*?

It involves much. In the ultimate, if faithfully pursued until the end, it involves complete freedom from the sin-principle and its inseparable companion, death. This is the gracious, unreserved title of freedom and release that we are freely given in baptism—freedom from sin, from sorrow, from pain, disease and death—freedom from all the burdensome limitations of human frailty and corruption.

But primarily, at the present time, it means a great lifting of the burden of the consciousness of sin—of sinfulness—of natural ugliness and deformity of character.

Paul exclaims, as he describes the awakening consciousness of the vicious evil that runs through every fibre of human nature—

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24).

Baptism is the loving and merciful provision for cleansing from this condition—

"Ye are washed,
Ye are sanctified (made holy),
Ye are justified (made righteous and upright)—in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and **by the Spirit of our God**" (1 Cor. 6:11).

The baptized believer is one with Christ—a part of Christ— an accepted part of the triumphant perfection of holiness which in Christ trod sin under foot and held it powerless.

The baptized believer is a *Brother in Christ*—he has a guaranteed part in the final and eternal victory of sin and death—*as long as he truly abides in Christ*. Jesus said to his disciples, on the night before his death—

"Abide in me, and I in you. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."
—the glorious Spirit-fruits of holiness of character—

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

"This is my **commandment**—that ye LOVE ONE ANOTHER, **even as I have loved you**"
(vs. 11-12).

It is an essential requirement of discipleship that we, as brethren, love one another in the same way he loved us. Of that love which he has given us as a pattern, he says, as he continues—

"Greater love hath no man than this—that a man lay down his life for his friends" (v. 13).

This is the love and fellowship to which baptism opens the door. And the new brother, as he rises from the cleansing waters, says with Paul (Gal. 2:20)—

"I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."
—G.V.G.

Joseph was put sorely to the proof before he saw the light. He had but little inducement as a slave to keep God in his remembrance, and make His will the law of his life. Yet was he steadfast for many dark years of adversity, and, at last, sat on the throne as the light of his Father's house.

Signs of the Times

"Prepare war, wake up the mighty men . . . Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge the nations round about"—Joel 3:9-12.

With the Hungarian revolt completely crushed, and world interest diverted from that area, the Middle-East commands the spotlight as this troubled area breeds more tension and problems.

Opinions of world statesmen and news analysts all agree on one thing: The problems which keep this area in a state of constant turmoil must be dissolved or it will become the breeding ground of another world war which could end civilization on earth. Just a few samples of the comment: by Sec. Dulles—

"The Middle-East has become the most vital spot on earth."

"The cradle of civilization may become its grave, if mis-judgment in the Mid-East sets off World War 3"—Denver Post.

"The last chance to block Russia in the Middle-East is at hand. . . If there is another (World War) it could start in a place called Mosul or Aleppo, or some other dusty outpost of the Middle-East"—Wm. Ryan, just returned from his 4th trip to the Middle East.

President Eisenhower's plan for checking Russian penetration and war in the Middle-East has been approved by the House and Senate, but it is being accepted with serious misgivings by most of the legislators and other government authorities.

The weakness of the proposal, which calls for huge expenditure of money and the use of U. S. armed forces in the Middle-East, lies in the fact that it came about as a sudden change of policy, forced upon the State Department after all other methods had failed; and the fact that it is still very vague as to just how, and under what circumstances the President expects to spend the money or use the American forces as a means for preventing Russian penetration and war in this tense and troubled area.

We are told that it is to stop aggression, but "aggression" has become a meaningless term in the midst of the intrigue, political scheming and rivalry, existing not only in this bellicose and unsettled area, where ancient hates and rivalries, poverty and unrest remain undiminished, but in all the world all enemies are called "aggressors."

"Evil goes forth from nation to nation," as each one tries to convince the world that their cause is just and all who get in their way are "aggressors." The complexity of such a situation can be seen when we consider that Russia and all her sympathizers have already branded the U. S. interference in the Middle-East as an act of aggression and a scheme to accomplish the very thing which they accuse Russia of doing; that is, penetrate the area solely for their own advantage.

Russia counters the "Eisenhower doctrine" by also offering to aid any Arab nation in opposing aggression. She is offering them economic aid, favorable trade agreements, selling them Russian goods at cut-rate prices, and supplying them with arms. Russia has shown herself ready and willing to come to the aid of any Arab state which gets in trouble with the Western powers. Anticipating that the Eisenhower plan will include the establishment of military bases in the Middle-East, similar to the bases already existing in other parts of the world, Russia has accused the U. S. of "forming an atomic ring" around Russia, and has warned Turkey and Iran, as she warned Japan, that if they permitted—

". . . the launching of any of these (atomic) weapons of war from their countries, Russia will answer with blows delivered by the same weapons."

Meanwhile the increased tension in the Middle-East, and the avowed intention of the U. S. to "stop Russia" even if it means war, has stepped up war preparation to an alarming pace. Gone are all the soft words about atomic control, reduction of armaments, or living at peace with Communism. The "Democratic" world now realizes fully they must destroy Russia or be destroyed.

All thought of balancing the budget or cutting taxes has been abandoned by the American Congress. With a 72 billion budget (the greatest of any peace-time period), the American people are dedicated to war preparation on a scale exceeding anything ever known or anticipated; not only to build up her own defences to exceed anything that Russia can offer, but to strengthen the defences of her allies as well.

Surely the nations are heeding the proclamation, "Prepare for war!" with a vengeance. For, like chain reaction, it means that Russia and her allies must do likewise. Is it not quite possible that this new surge of armament rivalry, and the unmasking of the intentions of the belligerents may be the final stage of the gathering to Armageddon?

There is much "viewing with alarm" in Washington as Federal spending rises to an all-time high. Interest on the public debt today equals all government spending 20 years ago. The amount spent on war preparation annually now equals all federal government spending in 1938. But regardless of the fear of inflation and business depression, that fear is outweighed by the fear of losing a war with Russia. Russian war expenditures about equals that of the U. S., while the rest of the world also lays a heavy burden of taxes on its people as they join in the cry, "Prepare war! Let the weak say, I am strong!"

A number of disquieting things have come to light recently concerning Russian might which were either unknown or else concealed from the public. According to the "Symington Report" Russia is exceeding the U. S. in air supremacy, and it is the opinion of many that she has exceeded the world in the production of guided missiles and submarines. Russia, it is known, has as many as 400 of these underwater craft, which were primarily built for launching guided missiles. It is known that these missiles can be launched from a distance of 200 miles. Thus a guided missile could be dropped upon any coast city if the launching ship is able to approach within 200 miles of the target. It is reported that Russia is establishing a submarine base in the Antarctic from which operations could be directed against Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific and Atlantic.

Another cause for alarm, a thing which has been vividly brought out in the closing of the Suez canal, is the realization that Western Europe and Britain are solely dependent on the Mid-East for an adequate supply of oil. Which means that, if Russia, in collusion with the Arab states, could gain control of Mid-East oil, she could control Europe and seriously cripple Britain by the simple device of

shutting off the flow of oil to any country which refused to line up with Russian policies. Russian penetration of the Middle-East could easily give her a strangle hold on all Europe as well as Western Asia and North Africa.

Russia now comes up with her own formula for settlement of the Middle-East controversies. Though her actions belie her words, she now proposes to ban all shipments of arms to the area, dismantling all foreign army posts and air fields, withdrawal of all foreign troops, and a policy of non-interference in Middle-East affairs. But the Western powers naturally look with suspicion upon this move as a stratagem to get the Western powers out so that Russia might have a clear field of operations. In such a situation Russia would have everything to gain and nothing to lose. This latest move by Russia appears aimed at scuttling the Eisenhower plan and offsetting U.S.'s agreements with Saudi-Arabia.

Meanwhile the UN efforts to bring about a settlement of the Egyptian-Israeli-Arab disputes drag on with no satisfactory agreement in sight. So irreconcilable are the issues involved that nothing more than a temporary cessation of hostilities can be expected. Israel will never consent to giving up the Gaza strip or the gulf of Aqaba unless forced to do so. Egypt is just as determined that Israel must unconditionally vacate these areas. However it turns out, one or the other, or both, will be left dissatisfied, a situation which cannot long remain quiescent.

Egypt promises to permit Israel to use the gulf of Aqaba, but says nothing about the Suez canal in this connection. British and American opinion seems to favor Israel in her shipping demands, but offer nothing more than moral support in the matter, and Israel will certainly demand more than a bare promise from Nasser, whom they have learned, by bitter experience, cannot be trusted.

The world grows smaller as one demonstration after another shows that any spot on earth is vulnerable to attack from any quarter. A jet bomber flies across the U. S. in 3 hrs., 47 min. Five U.S. bombers encircle the earth in 45 hours, non-stop, making an average speed of more than 500 miles per hour. No wonder men's hearts fail from fear of what is coming on the earth as they envision the air filled with these monsters of destruction capable of laying waste large cities in a matter of minutes. Surely it cannot progress much further. How soon may it be when "the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth to the other"? The Prince of Peace alone can save mankind from self-destruction.

—O.B.

Ecclesial News

LAMPASAS, Tex.—Christadelphian Hall, Avenue I East—Bible Study 10 a.m.; Memorial 11 a.m.

We have had the pleasure of meeting around the table of the Lord with the following visitors: bro. & sis. Joe Burkett, bro. & sis. Chas. Banta, bro. Lonnie Carroll, sis. Joyce Sisson (Houston), and sis. Oriole Bailey (Stonewall). Bro. Carroll ministered the word of exhortation on Dec. 30.

Our study of Elpis Israel in the Sunday morning Bible Class is proving to be very interesting and instructive. We believe that a careful study of the words of bre. Thomas and Roberts would do much to strengthen the ecclesias against the trials of these latter days, and prepare them for the day of the Lord.

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LONDON, Ontario—Orange Hall, 388 Clarence St.—Sun. Sch. 10:15 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11:30 a.m. (July-Aug. 11 a.m.) Lecture 7 p.m.; Wed. Bible Class 8 p.m. at WCTU Hall on Clarence ½ block N. of Dundas St.

We are sorry indeed to report that our brother William Boyce, husband of sis. Helen (Jackson) Boyce, fell asleep after a brief illness on Sat., Feb. 2, and was laid to rest on Feb. 6 in Mount Pleasant

cemetery. Bro. F. Higham of Detroit called attention to the earnest hope of the true believer and that day is very near when our Lord shall return (who is the Resurrection and the Life). As we have these things happen amongst us it stirs us up to be ready. Our brother's sleep will not be long, the day of our redemption draws nigh.

We plan, if our Lord be willing, to have our Fraternal Gathering on April 19 in the Orange Hall. Notices and copies of the program will go out shortly. We would like to have you with us.

We have been edified and strengthened by the labors of our bre. F. Higham and G. Growcott of Detroit. We have also had the pleasure of the company and fellowship of sis. Fred Higham and bro. Ellis Higham of Detroit, bro. & sis. Jos. Jackson and sis. Beasley of Toronto. We welcome all those of like precious faith.
—bro. W. D. Gwalchmai

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MIAMI, Florida—3428 S. W. 65th Ave.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 10:30.

During the past year we have had the pleasure of visits from bro. & sis. Caldwell and sis. Glenda Caldwell (Houston), and sisters Bird and Fenn (Istachatta, Fla.)

We miss the company of bro. & sis. Cassidy, who have moved to Texas.

With love to all the Household, yours in Israel's Hope.

—bro. Thomas Lumley

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WORCESTER, Mass.—Grandview Hall, 21 Grandview Ave.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 11; Lecture 7 p.m. twice a month.

We held our annual Sunday School entertainment in our hall on Dec. 16. It was not a very promising day to start with, but turned out to be a good day, clearing, and not too cold.

We were very pleased to have a goodly number of our brethren and sisters from Boston joining us at this time: bre. & sisters John Davey, Russell, Sargent Sr., bre. Sargent Jr., Duerden, sisters Hilda Davey and Esther Lancour.

Bro. Russell gave the exhortation, admonishing us in those things assuredly believed among us to the upbuilding and strengthening of the Faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The signs of the times and the movements of the nations are indicative of the soon return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to take unto himself his great power and reign; and his command to the Household is to "Watch!" that we may be ready to receive him at his coming.

The Middle East is the center of the latter day trouble and the eyes of all nations are focussed there, realizing that there could be an eruption that would evoke World War II, or "the Great Battle of the Lord God Almighty" in the place called Armageddon, for "All nations will be gathered to battle against Jerusalem."

We are in the latter days of Gentile times, hoping that at any day now we may receive the welcome summons to meet our Lord, either by angelic visitor or any other means he may in his wisdom adopt. We are, therefore, as it were, standing waiting to be ushered into the presence of the Son of God; first as our Judge and then, if acceptable to him and found worthy of his friendship, to be chosen as constituents of his Bride-elect. As we give thought to this, is it not fitting that we should be busy preparing for such a glorious change in our experience and surroundings?

Surely we want to be pleasing in our Master's eyes. We know that much preparation is made beforehand by a natural bride—shall we be any less diligent in our endeavor to be found well-pleasing in the eyes of the heavenly Bridegroom?

When we stop and meditate on this we realize that there never was such a marriage ceremony and feast as that to which we are called. There never was such a glorious and exalted Bridegroom as the Lord of glory, who invites us to be his, and there never was so glorious and beautiful a Bride as the Lamb's wife will be when, perfected and in joyous assemblage, she surrounds her Lord and Master on Mount Zion in the day of his installation there as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Knowing these things, it behoves us to be on our guard and not neglect our daily readings, for Christ has foreshadowed that just before he appears some will neglect the Word of life. Whatever the causes that lead up to such a condition, it remains a fact that it will be neglected.

How are we sure that the Word of God will be neglected by many claiming to be "saints" in these latter days? The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1)—

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter days some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, etc."

What better proof can we have than Christ's parable of the ten virgins? Are not these virgins none other than two distinct classes of professing saints in the earth at our Savior's appearing—the one class the wise who would understand, having oil in their lamps—the other the foolish, having no oil?

As we consider this situation we realize that the foolish virgins have had lamps, and they have had oil, and their lamps have been burning—but now their lamps have gone out. Why did they go out? This is a very simple question—it was simply because they had no oil.

The Bridegroom has come. The foolish virgins suddenly realize that there is ONE THING needed—oil, and they are seeking for it. The wise with their brightly shining lamps are gone. The foolish are alone, looking for oil in the darkness. They realize now, if never before, they cannot meet him with empty lamps.

This is a lesson for us. We realize only too well that the Bridegroom is coming. Let us ask ourselves, "Are there empty lamps today?" Soon the cry will be heard, "Too late!"

As we wait Zion's glad morning when the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his rays, let us not allow any present thing to cause us to lessen our hold upon and interest in the Word of life. Let us give all diligence to keeping our lamps burning brightly, well supplied with the Spirit-oil of the Word deeply meditated upon, so that when we hear the Bridegroom has come we shall be found ready for him.

After the Memorial Service dinner was served, following which bro. Will Davey conducted the exercises of the Sunday School program, consisting of recitations and singing of hymns. Bro. Davey spoke to the children. The program being finished, prizes were awarded to the scholars according to their marks received during the year.

Thus ended a very enjoyable day with those of like precious Faith, with thankfulness to our heavenly Father for having the pleasure of the good things of His providing.

With fraternal love to all the Household from the brethren and sisters in Worcester,
—bro. Russell Waid

London Fraternal Gathering

(If the Lord will)

Friday, April 19 — Orange Hall, 388 Clarence St.

Write to: bro. W. D. Gwalchmai, 173 Devonshire, London, Ont., Canada.

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